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nely" there. It is recognized that a girl may feign possession, perhaps to gain attention, perhaps to rush off wildly into the woods followed by a young man intent on taking care of her desires while there.

Ghosts are ultimately driven out either by throwing the host person bodily into a river, or by inducing the ghost into a lock of her hair, which is then cut off and either nailed to a tree or corked carefully into a bottle and buried away from the village so that it cannot escape again. The following cases offer a fair range of Badaga exorcism practices.

8.3. CASE 1. In 1962 a boy, aged 18, failed the S.S.L.C. examination and committed suicide by hanging himself. He did this because he had told all his friends he would certainly pass, and so could not face them.

Another man and his 16-year-old wife slept in a separate house from that of the man's parents. One night when they were on the way to this house the ghost of the suicide entered the girl. He was not related to her, but was in a distant "sister's husband" relationship to her husband. A month after the ghost got into her, it became active.

In May 1963, the ghost was driven out by a Badaga exorcist from another village. He is reputed to know spells strong enough to kill people, and some strong enough to remove curses laid on by other magicians. In the present case, once the ghost became active in the girl, she went into a trance and claimed to be this person or that; always a male, though. It was because the people thought she was feigning possession and would not believe her that her husband brought the exorcist. At the first seance he told her she was bluffing; and so then while in a trance she identified some of the people present, even though she was newly married to this village and might not have known everyone there. After that the people believed she had a ghost, and the ghost "started telling the truth."

Every night for a week the exorcist held a seance with her, for which he came from his village especially. A crowd of some 50 or 60 villagers, including the girl's close relatives, was always present. These people came because it is the customary thing to do, rather than because they were curious. During the seance they sang folksongs, but not hymns; and on the last day they were thanked for coming and singing. The exorcist gets little for his work: on the last evening he is usually given a loincloth and a cloak. Each seance began around 2200 hrs., and lasted for two or three hours. It was

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always in the husband's house. First the exorcist would draw a chalk pattern each evening, and the girl would sit in front of this. The villagers present would begin to sing; and then suddenly the girl would get up and start dancing. She performed no recognizable dance-step, but simply jumped around the room. On the first night the ghost revealed his true identity through her mouth. Then the exorcist asked the ghost why he was troubling the girl; and the ghost replied that he was still young, and had anxieties and needs. He then explained to them what he wanted. He had never had a chance to drink arrack (see 2.6) while he was alive; so now he wanted arrack, cigarettes and some food. Then the relatives asked the exorcist to remove the ghost. The man first said some spells, and the villagers sang. They were not able to understand his spells, although they were in Badagu, for he always muttered them under his breath. This process of chalk pattern, singing, dancing and spells went on at every seance.

The final seance also began at 2200 hrs., and after the pattern was drawn and the initial spell uttered, the girl was given arrack to drink, smoked some cigarettes and ate some food. After this the ghost bade farewell to his friends, and regretted having committed suicide. Then the exorcist took her off towards the highest hill, to a point more than a kilometer from the village though still within its boundaries. This was selected as being a distant place to which people would seldom go. A group of some 20 youths accompanied the pair all the way to the final place, singing as they went. Once they reached this point, the girl fainted and fell down. No medicine or water was given to her; but the youths watched as the man said spells over her. After that the girl got up of her own accord. When they were leaving the house, the ghost had promised that he would make some sound as a sign that he had left the girl's body: now he was heard to whistle from a point a few hundred meters away from where these people stood. Next the exorcist cut a piece of hair from the girl's head. He tied it to a nail and pushed this into the ground. Then he did some *pu:ja* to it, whereby the power of his spell was transferred to the nail. The belief is that the ghost cannot cross the iron nail.

In returning to the house the party took a different route. Once they reached there the exorcist entered the house first, and then stood on the door-step and threw cold water over the girl before she entered. This was to test whether the ghost had really left her.

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Apparently it had; for were this not so the girl would have started dancing again. Since that time the ghost has given no further trouble.

8. 4. CASE 2. Lakshmanan's best friend was Lingan, an age-mate who lived in the same village. In 1951 Lingan studied very hard for the S. S. L. C. examination, but was the only one in his group who failed. Very dejected, he burnt all his school transcripts and notes while on the way home; and soon after entering his house, when his mother went out, he hanged himself from a rafter. A neighbouring old lady happened to come in and found Lingan hanging there: she came out shouting, and then Lakshmanan and some others rushed in. Lakshmanan lifted Lingan up while another person cut the rope. They sent for a doctor, but by the time he arrived the boy was dead.

Lingan's neighbour was Lakshmanan's cousin, an adolescent girl whom Lingan had been fond of. Shortly after his suicide Lingan possessed her; and when Lakshmanan came home for the college vacation in 1952 he went to see the girl who was supposedly possessed. She grabbed Lakshmanan by the arm, and the spirit in her spoke through her mouth, using her voice. The ghost, in talking to Lakshmanan, did not say it was Lingan, and Lakshmanan disbelieved it anyway. Then Lakshamanan and the ghost began to talk about certain secrets that supposedly only the two of them had known about. One thing was that they used to go out of the village together to smoke; so now Lakshmanan said, "How about a smoke?" The ghost agreed and asked for some Scissors cigarettes, Lingan's favourite brand. Lakshmanan gave a cigarette to the girl, who supposedly had never smoked, and told the ghost to smoke it as he used to. The girl then went through Lingan's special routine of taking a match from the box and lighting it, using one hand only, and then once the cigarette was lit blowing numerous smoke rings.

By now Lakshmanan felt that the spirit must be Lingan, and the ghost then admitted that he was. The ghost proved his identity by saying the complete Gettysburg Address in English. This was something the two boys had studied for the S. S. L. C. ; yet the girl, who mouthed it perfectly, herself spoke little Tamil and no English at all, for she was illiterate! Lakshmanan then said, "How about the other things we learnt for the S.S.L.C.?" The ghost then continued with all of Tennyson's "Daffodils" and Sarojini Naidu's poem "Bangle Seller," in good English.

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It was decided that a Badaga priest in the village would exorcise the spirit. Usually, as in this case, the ghost is told it is going to be exorcised, and is then allowed some time to think over what things it wants. The ghost gives a list of its favourite things—food, clothes, books, etc.—and these are all brought for it from the market. In this village, after the spells have been said, the possessed person is taken to a place on the road outside the Mission Bungalow, where there is a large rock; and the ditch there used to be very deep. All the things needed by the spirit are thrown in this ditch, and nobody ever takes them away. Many are even afraid to look at the things. No matter how valuable the goods, even beggars know that they belong to a ghost. It is at this point in the exorcism that people do whatever else the spirit requests, such as dancing or singing. The spirit is then induced into a hair of the possessed. That hair is next cut off and put into a bottle that has previously been chosen by the spirit, and into which a nail is also placed. The hair is fixed tight in the neck of the bottle when the cork is jammed in, and then the part of the hair still protruding from the neck is cut off. The exorcist holds the bottle up and without shaking it, watches the nail constantly jiggling up and down. This movement of the nail is the test to check that the spirit really is in the bottle. The possessed person immediately becomes normal. Finally, the bottle and the loose piece of hair that has been cut from its neck are thrown into whatever place the spirit has previously chosen.

This was the process used in the exorcism of Lingan's ghost. Lakshmanan, the informant, witnessed it all because early in the exorcism the ghost had insisted that Lakshmanan accompany him to the end.

8.5. CASE 3. A Badaga in one village was a very powerful exorcist; but although he had learnt the art no one knew about it. One night a Tamil was busy exorcising a ghost in that village, when the ghost told him, "You are only a beginner, you can't drive me out. Only the man outside can drive me away."

The Tamilian looked out and only saw a local Badaga man; so he doubted the ghost's word, but checked with it again and then brought the Badaga inside. This man then told the Tamilian that the latter was only a raw recruit; that he should be content with the Rs 6-4 he had already earned, and should not come to the hamlet again to exorcise.

Then the Badaga got the story from the ghost. Its name had been

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Karuppu, and it was from the city of Tiruchirapalli. It had come up from the Plains on a rice lorry, and then wandered around until it got inside a girl. The ghost said it was doing no harm, and wanted to stay there; but the Badaga insisted that it should leave. The ghost asked if it could stay with the exorcist until it could be put on a lorry going to the Plains. Then the Badaga thought to ask the ghost to check how many other ghosts were in this same village. The possessed girl sat quietly for two minutes while the ghost went round the village. Each girl in the hamlet who had a ghost then jumped up and started dancing. Meanwhile the ghost reported back to the exorcist that there were five other ghosts. He replied, "Bring them here." Then the five possessed girls of their own accord all left their homes at the same time and came to that house in a state of possession. It was night-time. The Badaga drove all of the ghosts out, but kept Karuppu knotted in a handkerchief in his pocket until later he got a chance to throw the handkerchief on a lorry going down to the Plains. After that all of the possessed girls were normal again.

On another occasion a man in that village had to go home late at night, and was afraid of meeting ghosts. This same exorcist therefore gave him three stones to carry, telling him that as long as he held them the ghosts could not possess him. Later, on the way home, he was followed by a female ghost. She came right up to his house with him, although he threatened her all the way. After entering his door the man threw the three stones at her and she disappeared.

8.6. CASE 4. A middle-aged woman appeared to be possessed by a ghost: she had the signs of its being in her for nearly a year. An exorcist meanwhile came to the village as a therapist to try and cure another sick girl. As he was not successful people thought that girl had a ghost in her. They therefore held a seance at which many women were present, among them this middle-aged women. During the exorcism the patient showed no signs of a ghost, but the older woman did. The exorcist then said a spell and "stopped" the ghost in the woman. He told her that there was a ghost in her; he had caught if for the moment, but she must prepare to have it finally removed one day. From that time until the final exorcism there was no other sign of ghost or sickness in this woman. Her own husband said that she had had a ghost in her for the last five years; yet after the final exorcism he decided it was not a ghost at all but "something wrong inside."

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wrong inside."

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This woman had in fact married three or four husbands in the proper manner, and divorced each in turn. She then ran away with a young man. After three months she left this man, became a Christian, served in a local Church, then was transferred to Bangalore and left the Church. She was not heard of for five or six years and then turned up one day in her natal village with a small boy. She said she had married a Tamilian in Bangalore who was now outside the village and was afraid to come in. Somebody went to bring him while the woman begged her relative not to say that she had ever been married before or had become a Christian. To this, he agreed. The three of them finally settled in a small town.

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Generally a man exorcising a ghost makes a chalk pattern, and puts flowers and incense on it. In the exorcism of this woman, however, this was not done. She sat in a chair during the session, which lasted from 0745 to 0900 hrs., facing a table on which was a large picture of Murugan (Subramaniam) and some other small ones too. The exorcist sat on another chair beside her. On the table were a lime fruit, some camphor and also a plate with raw yellow rice and sacred ash on it. Ash marks were also on the four corners of her seat.

To start with the man told the ghost: "You promised the other day that when we made *pu:ja* you would go away. Now you say you aren't going." The ghost then said it would go away about 0800 hrs. At about 0815 hrs. the ghost was still arguing with the exorcist that it was not yet 0800 hrs. Then it said it would leave, but first the man must give it a picture of the Tamil god Murugan. The exorcist gave the picture to the woman. Then the ghost said it would break the glass; the man replied, "Take all the frame, too." "No, it's my will and pleasure," replied the ghost. And so the man and the ghost argued on. There were some signs that the lady was not really possessed. When her *sa:ri* fell down at the front, she put it back up on her shoulder. Had she really been possessed, she probably would not have known that it had fallen, I was told. At another point the man took a stick and threatened to hit her if the ghost would not leave her. The woman replied: "See, my brothers are here to protect me." This also suggests she was not really in a trance. At another time when the man threatened her she came over to an aunt, dragged her up, and then sat down in her place beside another relative and said to him: "See, he wants to hit me, and you aren't

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saying anything." The man remained quiet. Then the exorcist rubbed his hand around the plate of rice, and while staring at the woman said some spells. Next he told her to come back to her own seat, and she did. Then he again told the ghost it was past 0800 hrs. and the ghost had not yet left. It replied that it would go if it were given music, hymn-singing and a picture of Murugan. Then, on a relative's suggestion, the proceedings were postponed. That evening they held a *pu:ja* in one of the houses, with this same exorcist in charge. He gave a small religious picture to the ghost, and it went away—if indeed it was ever there!

Other Mental Disturbances

8.7. Cases of insanity are rarely observed in Badaga villages, not because of their infrequency but because the victims are usually killed off by their relatives with an over-dose of opium hidden in some food. In 1970 a madman hobbled with chains could however be seen in one village, but this was very unusual. Insanity is thought to be caused by a demoness, *Ka:teri pe:* who possesses a man, takes his food from him, will not leave him, and ultimately brings exhaustion by not letting him rest properly.

8.8. Witchcraft accusations are common in many parts of India (Epstein 1959), but among the Badagas this kind of paranoid behaviour does not occur *within* the community. Witchcraft is nonetheless present, but it is only the Kurumba and Irula sorcerers and occasional Todas (Rivers 1906: 262; Francis 1908: 144) whom Badagas accuse of it. This displacement of anxiety onto members of another tribe probably helps reduce it effectively. In one recent case a newly married man was apparently experiencing sexual frustrations with his wife: at any rate, he claimed that very often as he slept with his wife at night in a room off the veranda a Kurumba came, separated the two, and built a low brick wall in the bed between them. Such a thing could occur, it was believed, because the Kurumbas had the power to open a bolted door from the outside. The only known way to curtail a Kurumba's powers is to either knock out one of his teeth or cut off his hair (and probably burn it). Important in the containment of witchcraft is the fact that each cluster of Badaga villages appoints a Kurumba sorcerer to protect those Badagas from the sorcery of his fellow tribesmen. His concern for the welfare of his Badaga hosts is expressed symbolically by the key role he plays

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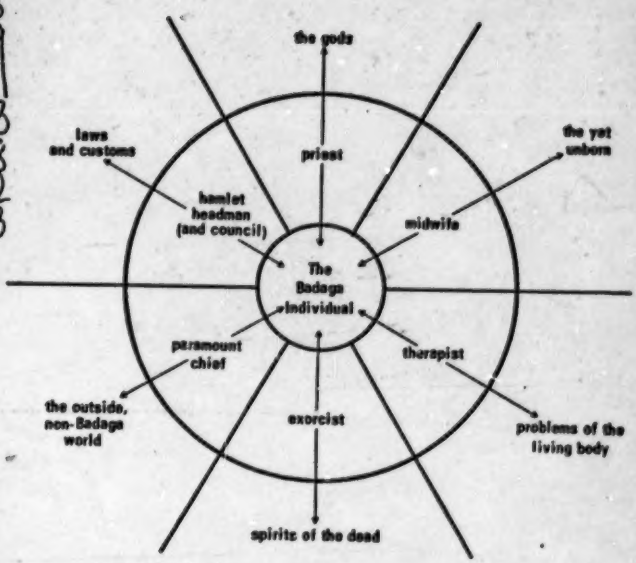

Diagram 5 : Spheres of Mediation

182 call in an appropriate mediator. As we shall see in the following section a token fee, travel expenses, or a small gift are the greatest
182 material rewards that most therapists would expect as a matter of course. The prestige that comes from serving their community is in
759 fact a more important consideration for all of the mediators; and when we recall that most therapists and all midwives are in fact women, it is understandable that they would not be practising out of a desire for material gain, since adult women are invariably married or widowed and thus are to be fully supported by their husbands or sons. In the words of the proverb, "If your lifetime is worth six [of something], taking care of [others'.] life is a hundred times more valuable." The therapists try their best, but their fellow villagers do not seem to expect miracles from them. It is
791 worth noting that Badagas credit only the male exorcists with some

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healing *powers*; all other specialists are only deemed to have therapeutic *skills*. There is an essential difference between a spell and a medicament.

Becoming a Therapist

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10.3. About three-quarters of the Badaga therapists are women. While I do not know their exact number, it seems that several of them are to be found in every clan and phratry of the community. This means that most of the 370 villages do *not* have their own therapist but can find one in a nearby hamlet. K. Sithamma, for example, was the most prominent therapist in the four or five villages contiguous to her own, and where she normally practised her craft—including one village of the Kota tribe. A hundred therapists and another two hundred experienced midwives would be my rough estimate of their numbers at present; but not all of them are still practising today.

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A sample of 420 Badaga adults was questioned in 1963 on whether anyone came to them for any medical advice and/or treatment. About 40 per cent of both the males and females stated that they did offer such advice, as is shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Dissemination of Medical Advice

	MALES	FEMALES
Who comes for medical advice ?—		
friends and relatives in general	21.9%	21.8%
anyone in need	8.6%	3.4%
only younger people	3.3%	10.9%
older, uneducated people	1.7%	0
immediate family members only	3.7%	5.0%
no one	59.8%	58.8%
not ascertainable	1.0%	0
	(*N*=301)	(*N*=119)

This table suggests that there are as many male as female therapists: this I rather doubt. Instead it seems likely that, numerically,

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task, and does not put it on again till she has bathed herself at the end of the pollution period.

Today each cluster of villages (i.e. Panchayat Board) has one trained nurse and two or three midwives appointed by the State Government. The later are just experienced Badaga midwives with no formal training who happen to have been recommended for the position.

Exorcists and Shaman s

10.7. Badaga exorcists are always male, and are very few in number. As often as not Badagas' ghosts have to be exorcized by non-Badaga exorcists. These men may also have lesser therapeutic skills, such as making talismans to ward off fevers and evil influences from the children who wear them. The idiosyncratic nature of exorcism is sufficiently indicated by the examples in Chapter 8 and calls for no further elaboration here.

The most feared *mantrava:dis* (shamans) in the Nilgiris were members of the Kurumba tribe, one of whom might be "called in on all occasions of blight and murrain to propitiate or scare the demon of disease"--if such there be (Breeks 1873: 53). Though this may still occasionally happen, I find no record of Kurumbas acting as exorcists to the Badagas, even though they did offer much supernatural protection to them from the sorcery of other malicious Kurumbas ; and they do sometimes try to cure the sick. Thus, "In 1891, the inmates of a single Kurumba but were said to have been murdered, and the hut burnt to ashes, because one of the family had been treating a sick Badaga child, and failed to cure it.... Again, in 1900, a whole family of Kurumbas were murdered, of which the head, who had a reputation as a medicine man, was believed to have brought disease and death into a Badaga village." (Thurston 1912: 233-34 ; also 1909 : 86). The Badagas were never so brutal with their own therapists, but the latter never seemed to be holding the threat of sorcery over the heads of their fellows. The worst that an unpopular therapist might have to suffer would be the mockery of an appropriate proverb; for instance, "He has healed others, but cannot cure himself" (Metz 1864 :95), or "It is half bad if you do something [wrong] when you know about it; entirely bad if you do it when you are ignorant."

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Other Specialists

10.8. Midwives and exorcists are specialists, of course, but they differ in status. The midwife deals in the pollution of blood, and is always a female; the exorcist deals in the danger that spirits bring, and is invariably a male. It is thus in accordance with Hindu —and Badaga—thinking that the exorcist ranks higher and the midwife lower in esteem than the more general therapist, whether male or female: one handles supernatural power, the other female pollution.

Aside from these categories, however, there are other specialists who are known for their ability to handle particular types of malady. In the foregoing chapters we have encountered three instances of such people. One was a woman, the grandmother of my informant M. N. Thesingh. At the time of her death in 1941 she had treated "nearly a thousand cases" of infertility in women, and found only half-a-dozen of these to be really barren women. For the rest, she prepared a medicine out of three or four different plants. What they were was a secret she took with her to the grave, for she thought that if she taught the medicine to anyone else it would not work well for either of them. She even told her grandson, "You must discover the technique for yourself." He took this to mean that he should spy on her, and once did so. She used to get up at about five in the morning, wash, and then go out to the fields or the forest. On reaching the spot where the necessary plants grew, she looked around till she saw what she wanted; then, with the plant in front of her, she stood facing the east, her palms touching each other as she prayed. Then she sat cross-legged on the ground at that spot and removed a silver ring from the middle finger of the right hand. This she placed on the plant that was in front of her, prayed again, then replaced the ring and picked the plant. She explained later that the ring was an offering to God ; but her grandson failed to discover the identity of the plants.

One case that is remembered by him illustrates the assurance with which this woman treated her patients. A 19-year old girl was was brought from a very distant village, her problem being that she had never menstruated (or had she, but was afraid to admit it for fear of being married?). She arrived on Wednesday, but the therapist (like her daughter-in-law Sithamma) refused to begin new treatment unless on a Tuesday, Friday or Sunday, which are auspicious days; so the girl had to wait.